



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Romans 12: 1-21

~ Brent Russell ~

- Let me start by asking a couple of questions
- What is our purpose on earth? - Not goal - goal is the end
- What does Jesus want us to do?
- **One of our goals is to get to heaven and to take as many with us as we can**
- But our purpose is something different

LET US READ ROMANS 12:1-21

- Paul gives us the answer in vs 2
- **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind**
- Paul writes elsewhere to the **Colossians** about us putting off the old self and putting on the new self which is being renewed in the knowledge of the image of it's creator

- To put it simply we need to **become like Jesus**
- We need to **become like Jesus for those around us**
- We need to be **His presence** here on earth

- Our minds need to be **renewed from an earthly thought process to a heavenly thought process**
- We need to **think and act like Jesus**

- What is our churches **vision for 2003?**
 - Know your gift
 - Use your gift
 - Enjoy your gift
- Today I want to **continue our theme of preaching on the gifts**
- There is always some **difficulty in preaching** on these kind of things
sop bear with me
- Particularly I want us to look at **three of the gifts Paul mentions in Romans 12 vs. 8**
 - Mercy
 - Leadership
 - Giving

- And I want to look at them with regards to us becoming like Jesus
- How do these gifts **fit in with Christ-like thinking?**
- What does it mean to become like Jesus with how we use and understand these three gifts?

Being transformed into Christ likeness is having spiritual gifts

- When we become believers we begin this transformation and **renewal of our minds**
- Paul says **no more worldly thought patterns but be transformed**
- Part of our transformation is the **Holy Spirit giving us Spiritual gifts**
- And we need to **USE** our gifts if we are to be Christ like
- But there is also a cost to using the gifts

Generosity

- Selfishness, greed, grabbing, me, mine, must have, must keep
- We need to be transformed from these attitudes
- Worldly thinking is greed
- Christ like thinking is generosity
- As the spirit renews our minds we begin to release our hold on material things
- We realize the power of our wealth to bless others
- Greed needs to be transformed into the gift of generosity

Leadership

- Pride, arrogance, power, control - look at me see how good I am
- As we are transformed into Christ likeness we need to rethink our leadership
- In Matthew 20:27 Jesus says I came to serve not to be served
- We need to move from a self focused style of leadership to become like Jesus
- A servant leader who's primary focus is the good of those he leads
- Self seeking leadership is transformed into the gift of servant leadership

Mercy

- I don't care, it does not affect me - I am fine
- When we look at Jesus ministry he clearly LOVED people
- Not just the nice, but the unloved, unlovable, outcasts, sinners lepers, prostitutes and Samaritans
- Worldly thinking blinds us it leads us to not care, to ignore
- We need to begin to understand the pain of others
- We need to sense and feel peoples hurt
- Meanness needs to be transformed to the gift of Mercy

Being Christ like means carrying his yoke

- Amongst many other things Jesus ministry was characterized by sacrifice and suffering
- He is the Suffering servant
- As we are transformed into his likeness
- As our minds take on his character and attitudes
- As we are released from worldly thinking and we get the gifts
- So to do we take His yoke upon us - We share in his suffering and sacrifice

Generosity

- Anyone want to guess what the yoke is that we carry as a result of generosity?
- Simple really - we may have to tighten our own spending
- We might have to do without some of the nice things we want
- But for many they come to Jesus like the rich young ruler and walk away disappointed
- There is a burden to carry as we are transformed into Christ like thinking
- Paul writes if you have a gift of contributing to others do it generously even if it costs you do it generously

Leadership

- The cost of servant leadership?
- The cost is having to put aside ones own agenda
- To seek *God's* will for His people - not ones own will
- It means less of **I** and more of **US**
- There is a cost involved for all who lead *God's* people
- We give of ourselves for the *Good* of *God's* people

Mercy

- The cost of giving mercy?
- The clue is in vs 8
- Give mercy cheerfully
- Having the gift of mercy hurts us in all sorts of areas
- We realize our own inadequacies as we try to help people through bereavement
- It sucks away our time
- It drains our energy as we give of ourselves to help those in pain
- Ok but the news is not all bad
- Jesus tells us that in *Matthew 11:30* by yoke is easy and my burden is light

- Let me ask you a question Do you think that Jesus is satisfied with what he achieved here on earth?
- Was his suffering and sacrifice worthwhile?
- Our final statement in our vision for the year is ENJOY YOUR GIFT
- Using your spiritual gifts as you are transformed into Christ likeness is not supposed to be something you HATE
- It must be a positive and fulfilling experience
- You **MUST** enjoy your gift

- The holy spirit is not some spiritual bully
- God does not force us to do things we do not like or that have no value

- As we use our gifts we receive blessing from them
- I want to share examples for each of these three gifts that will hopefully give you some idea of what I mean

Generosity

- Riana at Kraaifontein

Leadership

- I love my job
- Great responsibility
- But it gives me such a sense of satisfaction to see how God uses me for His purposes

Mercy

- Jim dying of cancer

- The satisfaction of God watching you touch the lives of people is something that is unmatched
- As you give materially to someone and you realize how it suddenly lifts the burden off their shoulders
- As you lead people as Jesus lead his disciples it is awesome to know that you are taking God's people towards Him
- As you give mercy you realize that you are giving Jesus love to this person and are shining His light into the darkness of their lives

CONCLUSION

- As the HS renews our minds and transformed us into Jesus image
- We are giving the gifts as our minds take on new thought patterns
- With the gifts come yokes, burdens
- But so too comes blessing that are to amazing to explain
- I cannot do them justice in words
- But to know that in whatever way you are gifted you are part of the most amazing Kingdom ever known